

How to sleep cool in summer



This article was written in collaboration with experts from Griffith University's Ethos Project.

Good sleep is essential for [healthy ageing](#), but Australia's sweltering summer nights can make it difficult to rest.

Can't sleep in summer? Don't let the heat disrupt your sleep. Try these tips to stay cool and comfortable all night long.

Why does heat make it difficult to sleep?

Melatonin is a hormone produced in your brain to promote sleepiness. It's naturally produced when your core body temperature (CBT) lowers. A hot room keeps your CBT elevated, making it harder to feel sleepy.



What's the best sleeping temperature?

Ideal bedroom temperature for sleeping is below 20°C. Some degrees higher than this can be fine, but you might forgo your blanket.

Temperatures above 26°C, however, can cause:

- Disrupted sleep cycles
- Waking up multiple times in the night
- Fewer total hours of rest



What happens if you don't get good sleep?

Sleep deprivation negatively affects your mind and body:

- It's harder to [learn](#), focus, and think clearly. It's linked to worse mood, depression, and reduced thinking skills (such as [memory](#)).
- It weakens your immune system, disrupts your metabolism, and increases inflammation. It also raises your risk of heart disease, [diabetes](#), and obesity.

A bad night of sleep often leads to a bad day awake. However, while setting your air-conditioning (AC) to the lowest setting might help you sleep better, it can drive up your energy bill. Fortunately, there are cheaper and more energy-efficient tricks for staying cool.

What can you do when it's too hot to sleep?

Use fans and AC together for efficiency

Set your AC as high as you comfortably can, perhaps around 25°C, and pair it with a fan for improved airflow. Many AC units have a 'sleep mode' to conserve energy.

Note: If you prefer not to use AC at night, you can switch it to 'fan-only' mode.

You can also create a cross-breeze with multiple fans. Position one to draw in cooler air and another to push warm air out of your room. [It's a breeze!](#)

Note: Avoid pointing a fan at your face while you sleep, as this could irritate your airways.

Use natural cooling methods

Take a cool shower or bath before bed to lower your body temperature.

It's also helpful to [stay hydrated](#) during the day. This means you won't wake up thirsty, and it allows you to sweat at night to keep cool. Just avoid drinking lots of water right before bed, since a full bladder could wake you up in the night.

Choose bedding that helps you shed heat

- Use light cotton sheets.
- Wear breathable pyjamas that don't cover too much skin.
- Remove heat-trapping mattress toppers.
- Consider using a gel cooling pad or putting cold packs under your sheets.
- Consider a mattress and pillows made from breathable material such as bamboo fabric.

Avoid heat-generating activities before bed

Strenuous evening [exercise](#) raises body temperature and delays sleep readiness.

Alcohol and cigarettes can raise body temperature and disrupt sleep cycles.

Heavy, fatty, or spicy meals can make you feel too hot and uncomfortable for sleep. It's best to avoid them in the 2-3 hours leading up to bedtime.

Spread awareness, take action

Consider sharing this article with a friend to spread awareness on the impacts of heat. You can take charge of your health this summer—and you can do it on a budget, too. Use these tips to beat the heat and enjoy restful sleep all summer long.

You may also be interested in:

- More tips for [getting a good night's sleep](#)
- Our other articles in this series about [staying safe in hot weather](#) and [keeping your house cool in summer](#)
- Our next article with more practical tips to beat the heat, coming soon
- Griffith University's [Ethos Project](#)

Get in touch with LiveUp

Everyone is different so some of these tips may work better for you than others.

If you need more information, get in touch with one of our helpful team members on **1800 951 971**.

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